



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY  
OF THE UNITED STATES**

March 17, 2014

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Environment Committee  
Legislative Office Building, Room 3200  
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

Re: **SUPPORT of HB 5416 (Section 2), gestation crate ban**

Dear Senator Meyer, Representative Gentile, and Honorable Members of the Environment Committee,

On behalf of the Connecticut-based supporters of The Humane Society of the United States, I submit this letter in SUPPORT of HB 5416 (Section 2), which would allow pigs who are used for breeding to be able to stand up, lie down, turn around, and extend their limbs.

The vast majority of people believe that all animals -- including those raised for food -- deserve protection from abuse. Just as dogs and cats suffer when mistreated, pigs suffer greatly when confined in a manner that virtually immobilizes them for their entire lives.

**The issue**

Due to the duration and severity of their confinement, pigs in gestation crates suffer among the worst abuses in all of industrial agribusiness. For several years, they are confined to crates that nearly immobilize them, enduring a cycle of repeated impregnation. These individual cages are approximately **2 feet wide x 7 feet long**—so small the animals **can't even turn around** or take more than a step forward or backward. Because they can't move, they suffer muscle and bone weakness that often leads to lameness. And since these inquisitive, social, and intelligent animals are denied any mental stimulation, many become neurotic, engaging in repetitive coping behaviors, such as constantly biting the bars in front of them.

Renowned animal scientist Dr. Temple Grandin states, "Gestation crates are a real problem. Basically you're asking a sow to live in an airline seat. . . . We've got to treat animals right, and gestation stalls have got to go."

**How a ban on gestation crates supports and protects our local farmers**

Although gestation crates to our knowledge do not exist in Connecticut, banning them has great value because it promotes Connecticut's small, family-operated farming operations, who utilize best practices -- humane practices -- while preventing industrial farms from moving into Connecticut and putting our local farmers out of business, as has happened in other states.

***Over the past decades, responsible family farms all over our country have been pushed out by large factory farms.*** These factory farms don't just treat animals poorly and squeeze out sustainable producers—they also emit enormous amounts of water and air pollution that have devastating effects on the health of nearby residents. Many communities that once enjoyed a thriving rural economy with successful small farmers were caught off guard when factory farms moved in. By passing a gestation crate ban, Connecticut's lawmakers would help protect our small farmers.

Furthermore, enacting a ban would **make state policy clear** and thus enhance business opportunities for our state's farmers, whose humane-oriented **customers would know with certainty that pigs raised in Connecticut are treated humanely.**

### **Connecticut voters want a ban on gestation crates**

A May 2013 statewide survey by Mason-Dixon Polling & Research showed that **91% of Connecticut voters support gestation crate ban legislation**, and many family farms in Connecticut are joining the Connecticut Coalition for Humane Farms in support of a ban on gestation crates.

Gestation crates are banned in the European Union and Australia, and just last week, Canada announced plans to phase-out gestation crates. **Nine states** across the country, including Maine and Rhode Island, have already banned gestation crates. Connecticut should become the tenth.

### **Corporate trends**

Smithfield Foods, the nation's largest pig producer, and Hormel Foods, maker of SPAM, have already announced that they will end the confinement of sows in gestation crates in their company-owned facilities. Additionally, major corporations such as McDonald's, Burger King, Wendy's, and more than 60 others have announced that they will end gestation crate use in their supply chains, and more appear to be following.

Although some pork producers are rejecting gestation crates, others aren't, so it's important to have legislation in place so that unscrupulous producers can't confine animals in the cruel cages indefinitely. And while private policies from food retailers are important, legislation is the best tool we have to prevent and stop animal abuse. Connecticut should be a leader in advancing the commonsense value that **confining an animal in a crate so small she can't even turn around shouldn't be legal.**

Gestation crate ban legislation (HB 5416, Section 2) is a great opportunity to prevent animal abuse from coming into Connecticut, while improving the competitive landscape for our Connecticut family farmers.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and for all you do for animals.

Yours truly,



**Annie Hornish**

Connecticut State Director

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